

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A protective layer transfer sheet for use in ~~providing an~~ image forming method ~~comprising~~including ~~the steps of:~~

_____ ~~providing~~obtaining a print ~~output by~~from a non-silver photographic color hard copy recording system;

_____ ~~providing a protective layer transfer sheet comprising a thermally transferable protective layer having a single or multi-layer structure separably provided on a substrate sheet;~~

_____ ~~putting~~placing the print and the protective layer transfer sheet ~~on top of each in contact with each other, and thermally transferring the~~ a protective layer of the protective layer transfer sheet onto an image in a printed portion of the print so as to cover at least the the printed portion in the print; and

_____ ~~separating the protective layer substrate sheet from a remainder of the protective layer transfer sheet,~~ the protective layer transfer sheet comprising:

_____ a substrate sheet;

_____ a thermally transferable release layer formed on the substrate sheet, the thermally transferable release layer having a single- or multi-layer structure; and

_____ the thermally transferable protective layer formed on the thermally transferable release layer, the thermally transferable protective layer having a single- or multi-layer structure and comprising a thermoplastic resin having a storage modulus at 110 °C of 1×10^5

Pa or less.

20. (Withdrawn) A record comprising a protective layer provided on the image of a print by an image forming method comprising the steps of:

providing a print output by a nonsilver photographic color hard copy recording system;

providing a protective layer transfer sheet comprising a thermally transferable protective layer having a single or multi-layer structure separably provided on a substrate sheet;

putting the print and the protective layer transfer sheet on top of each other and thermally transferring the protective layer onto an image in the print so as to cover at least the printed portion in the print; and

separating the substrate sheet from the protective layer transfer sheet.

21. (Withdrawn) A record produced by an image forming method comprising the steps of:

providing a print output by a nonsilver photographic color hard copy recording system;

providing a protective layer transfer sheet comprising a thermally transferable protective layer having a single or multi-layer structure separably provided on a substrate sheet;

putting the print and the protective layer transfer sheet on top of each other and thermally transferring the protective layer onto an image in the print so as to cover at least the printed portion in the print; and

separating the substrate sheet from the protective layer transfer sheet, the record having a specular glossiness at 45 degrees in the range of 70 to 110% according to JIS Z 8741.

22. (Withdrawn) An image forming method comprising the steps of:

providing a protective layer transfer sheet comprising a thermally transferable protective layer having a single or multi-layer structure separably provided on a substrate sheet;

providing a print output by a nonsilver photographic color hard copy recording system;

putting the protective layer transfer sheet onto the print and thermally transferring the protective layer onto an image in the print so as to cover at least the printed portion; and

separating the substrate sheet from the protective layer transfer sheet to form an image provided with a protective layer,

the specular glossiness of the image provided with the protective layer being 65 to 110% as measured in the angle range of 45 to 75 degrees according to JIS Z 8741.

23. (Withdrawn) An image forming method comprising the steps of:

providing a protective layer transfer sheet comprising a thermally transferable protective layer having a single or multi-layer structure separably provided on a substrate sheet;

providing a print output by a nonsilver photographic color hard copy recording system;

putting the protective layer transfer sheet onto the print and thermally transferring the protective layer onto an image in the print so as to cover at least the printed portion; and

separating the substrate sheet from the protective layer transfer sheet to form an image provided with a protective layer,

the image in the print being a record of magenta gradation, the difference between the maximum value and the minimum value of the specular glossiness in the whole

gradation region of the image provided with the protective layer after the transfer of the protective layer being not more than 20% at 45 degrees as measured according to JIS Z 8741.

24. (Withdrawn) An image forming method comprising the steps of:

providing a protective layer transfer sheet comprising a thermally transferable protective layer having a single or multi-layer structure separably provided on a substrate sheet;

providing a print output by a nonsilver photographic color hard copy recording system;

putting the protective layer transfer sheet onto the print and thermally transferring the protective layer onto an image in the print so as to cover at least the printed portion; and

separating the substrate sheet from the protective layer transfer sheet to form an image provided with a protective layer,

the image in the print being a record of magenta gradation, the difference between the maximum value and the minimum value of the specular glossiness in the whole gradation region of the image provided with the protective layer after the transfer of the protective layer as measured at 45 degrees according to JIS Z 8741 being not more than 50% of the difference between the maximum value and the minimum value of the specular glossiness in the whole gradation region of the image provided with the protective layer before the transfer of the protective layer as measured at 45 degrees according to JIS Z 8741.

25. (Withdrawn) The image forming method according to claim 22, wherein the nonsilver photographic color hard copy recording system is any one of an electrophotographic recording system, an ink jet recording system, and a thermal transfer recording system.

26. (Withdrawn) The image forming method according to claim 22, wherein, in the protective layer transfer sheet, the thermally transferable protective layer contains an ultraviolet absorber.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Withdrawn) A record comprising a protective layer provided on an image in a print by the image forming method according to claim 22.

29-35. (Canceled)

36. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 19, wherein the substrate sheet is formed of plastic film having a thickness of from 2 to 100 μm .

37. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 36, wherein the plastic film has a specular glossiness at 45 degrees of 100% or less.

38. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 19, wherein a portion of the protective layer transfer sheet to be transferred provides a coverage of 3 to 30 g/m^2 .

39. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 19, wherein the thermoplastic resin has a Tg value of 40 °C to 100 °C.

40. (New) A protective layer transfer sheet for use in an image forming method including obtaining a print from a non-silver photographic color hard copy recording system, placing the print and the protective layer transfer sheet in contact with each other, thermally transferring a protective layer of the protective layer transfer sheet onto a printed portion of the print to cover at least the printed portion, and separating the protective layer from a remainder of the protective layer transfer sheet, the protective layer transfer sheet comprising:

a substrate sheet;

a thermally transferable release layer formed on the substrate sheet, the thermally transferable release layer having a single- or multi-layer structure;

a thermally transferable protective layer formed on the thermally transferable release layer, the thermally transferable protective layer having a single- or multi-layer structure and comprising a thermoplastic resin having a storage modulus at 110 °C of 1×10^5 Pa or less; and

a thermally transferable adhesive layer formed on the thermally transferable protective layer, the thermally transferable adhesive layer having a single- or multi-layer structure.

41. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 40, wherein the substrate sheet is formed of a plastic film having a thickness of from 2 to 100 μm .

42. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 41, wherein the plastic film has a specular glossiness at 45 degrees of not more than 100%.

43. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 40, wherein a portion of the protective layer transfer sheet to be transferred provides a coverage of 3 to 30 g/m^2 .

44. (New) The protective layer transfer sheet according to claim 40, wherein the thermoplastic resin has a Tg value of 40 °C to 100 °C.